

SOL ROLNITZKY

Vol. I, Side 1

Born in Lodz, Poland on October 4, 1912. Lodz was second largest city in Poland after Warsaw. Jewish population of Lodz was 250,000. The total population was one-third Jews, One-third Poles, and one-third Germans. He was one of nine children in his family. Of the nine children five still lived at home when the war broke out. Four were married. One sister had six children, one brother had five, two others had one each. He and two brothers left their home. Others didn't go because they were bakers and lived in the ghetto until 1942. Germans took people out from their families. In 1942 he was put into a work camp for 13-14 months. Camp was a terrible place. Those who couldn't work were shipped to other places. Every day the healthier ones were sent back to work. Was able to stay in ghetto until 1944. Hid each night so wouldn't be found. Someone warned him. At night they would come out because they were hunted only in daylight. Finally signs were posted saying anyone hiding would be shot. Therefore brother insisted on going to the train. They were put in cattle car to Auschwitz. When got off train people were separated by age groups. Stayed in Auschwitz for eight days. Was then sent to Fiedland which was a big factory where they made prop-ellers. Worked with people of all nationalities. four hundred Jews were there out of a thousand people. Other nationalities were Russians, Poles, Italians. Germans didn't come in, only their leader and he wasn't such a bad guy. This was only place during the war where he wasn't beaten each day. Liberated in May, 1945 by Russians. Had entered factory in August, 1944. Brother also lived through the war. Brother had been selected to clean up ghetto. One night he hid and didn't show up for grave-digging the next morning. German's sent dogs to look for absent Jews but Russians came just in time to liberate them. Russians didn't bother to help them only freed them. Sent them to hospitals if they were ill. Returned to Lodz to see who survived: a sister-in-law as well as the brother who had been chosen to clean up ghetto. This brother died 3½ years ago at age 62. An aunt in Detroit sent them papers and that is how they ended up in Detroit. That was 1949.

He was sent to work at death camp. Relates difficulties while working there: little food, long hours, heavy work, illness. Built a railroad track by laying ties. Started with 136 people and six weeks later less than fifty persons were still alive.. Stayed in Pozen 14-15 months.